

HON. B. E. MCLIN,
Commissioner of Agriculture.

The subject of the above cut, Hon. B. E. McLin, Commissioner of Agriculture, has the distinction of being the only member of the present Governor's official family who has served two full terms as the head of one of the State Departments, he having entered upon his official work as the head of the Department of Agriculture at the beginning of the administration of Governor W. S. Jennings, held office through Governor Broward's administration, and now enters upon his third term as Commissioner of Agriculture under the administration of Hon. Albert W. Gilchrist, the present Executive of the State of Florida. Commissioner McLin has the further distinction of having been nominated to a State office both by the convention and primary systems, as he was first nominated at the last and, perhaps, the largest State convention ever held in Florida, the convention of 1900 which was held in Jacksonville.

Prior to Mr. McLin's entering upon the duties of a State official, he had served in the capacity of a State Senator for three sessions of the Legislature, having been nominated and elected to represent the 23d district of Florida in the fall of 1895, after one of the most bitter contests that has ever been waged in any senatorial district in the State. To his credit, be it said, he was nominated for a second term of four years in the senate without opposition either in the primary or the general election.

On being asked upon what he based his success in being elected to public office, he stated that he thought he received strong support, without regard to factional alignment in the State, because it was soon learned that he was a man of convictions and had the moral courage to back his judgment and conscience in all matters that required one to take a positive stand; that while having positive views and convictions, he, at the same time, had always been tolerant with reference to the views of others. He stated that, in aspiring to public office, he found some of his strongest supporters were among those who frequently differed from him in their views relative to public matters, that several times he had been advised by such persons that they gave him their support because they always knew where to find him, that if he favored a view in accord with theirs they felt assured that it would be positive and not of a negative character and that if he antagonized their views they gave him credit for being able to give a reason for his convictions which, when given, they could not ask him to change. In other words, when a strong phrase, Mr. McLin said, he would never be a politician.

fence" on any proposition that it was his duty to have and express an opinion.

The second reason Mr. McLin gave to which he attributed much of his political success, was the fact that he had carried out, to the best of his ability, the lessons taught him by Democratic ancestors that "public office is a public trust." With this idea he had endeavored to treat all with the courtesy that the citizenship of a State are entitled to who have applied to the Department under his supervision for information in connection with any matters in the different divisions of the Department.

Another point Mr. McLin regards as a very important factor that has contributed to his support for public favors, is that he might be called a stickler in having all applications for information, addressed to his Department, promptly replied to. He said he usually called his clerical force together about the beginning of each administration, and advised them that his idea of making a political campaign was to commence the first day of each administrative term, the first day of each year, with a persistent effort to give prompt, and as complete as possible, information to all enquiries made by any individual citizen.

Upon asking the Commissioner if there were any particular matters that he had in mind that should receive consideration at the hands of the incoming legislature he said there were and mentioned the following:

"As set out fully in my tenth biennial report, I am very hopeful that the legislature will see fit, in their wisdom, to pass an act authorizing the Board of Commissioners of State Institutions or some other authority, to purchase a farm or farms upon which can be placed all female prisoners, the lame and invalid male prisoners, as well as the very young prisoners, that all such classes may be segregated from the lease, as the present contract for the lease, beginning 1910, has made provision for additional payment to be made by the lessees for the able-bodied that may not be withdrawn from the lease. I think it very important that the legislature take some action along this line while the prisoners are bringing sufficient revenue to justify the expenditures. This will be nucleus for a State penitentiary that can be developed and expanded from time to time as conditions and the will of the people of the State demand."

He stated that he thought it important that we have some uniform, general system governing county prisoners.

He thinks there should be legislation along the lines of indeterminate sentences to be authorized by law, as this is becoming very general throughout the country. One aim to this subject

is the parole system, being adopted in many other States for State prisoners. Something should be done along this line by proper legislation on the subject.

From eight years experience on the Pardoning Board, the Commissioner of Agriculture is satisfied from the written statements, as well as affidavits made by jurors who have tried criminal cases, that very frequently the intention of the jury who bring in the verdict of guilty, is not and cannot be applied under our present system of law. He thinks there should be a statute requiring each judge who tries criminal cases to give to the jury, in his charge, the penalty that will attend the verdict under certain degrees and requiring the judge to state, where there is any discretionary power left with the judge, the maximum and minimum penalties under the law in the event of their verdict being brought in under certain degrees of penalty.

The Commissioner is anxious that the legislature make an appropriation to the Department of Agriculture that will enable this division of the State Government to publish in pamphlet form or printed circulars, information on the various subjects of interest to the agriculturalists and horticulturists of the State.

He stated that his report was indexed in detail where his views on different subjects needing consideration could be found in more extended form than he could print in an article of this character.

The Department over which Mr. McLin presides is one of the most important in the State Government, covering the lands of the State, fertilizer and stock feed and pure food and drug laws, together with the State prison system of the State and all matters relating to immigration. All of the above being under his immediate supervision and direction, and that each receives thorough attention is attested by all who have any business with this department, or who are familiar with Mr. McLin and his efficient and accommodating corps of assistants. The work of the department is thoroughly systematized and one applying for information is met with a cordiality of manner and a cheerful readiness to serve, from the head of the department to each individual clerk, that makes it a pleasure indeed to transact business with them.

That this uniform courtesy and prompt attention to every detail of this important branch of the State's Government is observed and appreciated by the public is attested by the significant fact that no one has had the assurance to contest with Mr. McLin for this

position during the last two campaigns. That Mr. McLin is not unmindful of this mark of confidence and esteem upon the part of the public is shown by his untiring efforts to improve, if possible, the service and efficiency of each division of the important work over which he presides, and his constant insistence that the work relating to and information relative to each division of his department be given prompt attention by the particular individual in charge of the branch of the department from which information is desired.

Mr. McLin, by this close individual attention to every detail of his department, his insistence upon prompt attention to duty upon the part of his subordinates, and never failing courtesy to all with whom he may come in contact, in either a private or official way, typifies the expression that "public office is a public trust," and has gained for himself the confidence and esteem of all.

The Flag.

On June 14, 1777, the Continental congress resolved that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white, and that the Union be thirteen white stars on a blue field. On Jan. 13, 1794, by an act of congress, the flag was altered to fifteen red and white stripes and fifteen stars. On April 4, 1818, congress again altered the flag by returning to the original thirteen stripes and fifteen stars, on the adding of a new stripe for each additional state would soon make the flag too large. A new star is added to the flag on July 4 following the admission of each new state.—New York American.

Force of Habit.

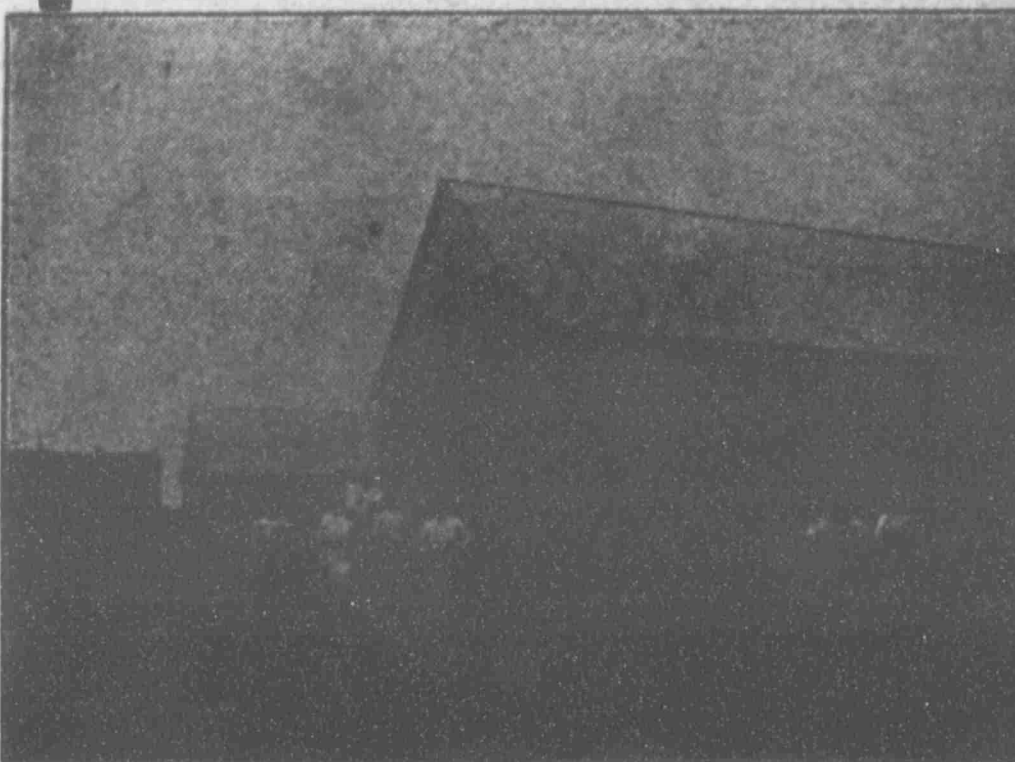
"The question of enlarging the church comes up tonight, John, doesn't it?" "Yes, dear, and we expect to have a lively time. They tell me the opposition to the pastor will be strong. Where's my overcoat? Oh, yes! And now I want the tin horn and the cow-bell and the big rattle."

"Mercy, John, what are you going to do?"

"Do! Why, I'm going to root for the pastor."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.



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Tallahassee, Florida.